

Making minority voices heard? Tensions between forms of participation in transnational areas

**Cases of private multi-stakeholder initiatives in
sustainable agriculture**

Project « Normes », ANR-ADD



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Context (1)

- **Increasing ecological criticism from NGOs**
- **Agricultural commodity sectors are denounced to be responsible of deforestation (palm oil, soy, etc.).**
- **From 2003: Emergence of Multi Stakeholder Initiatives to create sustainable voluntary standards through a series of transnational “Roundtable” :**
 - **RSPO : Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil**
 - **RTRS : Roundtable on Responsible Soy**
 - **Etc.**

Characteristic of those Roundtables

Roundtables are MSI (Multi Stakeholder Initiatives)

- Involve growers, processors, traders, importers, banks, environmental NGOs, social and development NGOs, etc.
(Private agents – Business / NGOs)

- Voluntary processes (non mandatory)

- Transnational

- Aim : Define & promote sustainability

by :

Definition of good practices : list of Criteria

Control : 1/3 party certification



Context (2)

- **MSI based on a rationale-legitimacy- on (in the discourses of participants/promoters):**
 - **Failure of Governments** to take responsibility for environmental goods
 - « **Inclusiveness** » : open, balanced representation, include all categories of stakeholders in participative and inclusive processes, dialogue/consensus.
- = speak for a large number of voices (stakeholders)**
- => Presented as principle of efficiency and authority of MSI**
- => Equal participation requirements**

Critical Perspective

- **Local communities and small family farmers fell they have a difficulty in making their voices heard in the format of debate proposed.**
- How those Roundtables:
 - * Address the question of « equal participation »?
 - * Focus the legitimacy of participants?
 - * Address the question of pluralism of visions?
- Critic of the inclusiveness capacity of those MSI.
- Sociologie des “Régimes d’engagement”: L. Thévenot, 2006.

We need forest to stock carbon

*Sustainability is a more **efficient** production to feed many people*

*The forest for us is a **patirmoine***

We need to satisfy the demand for oil markets

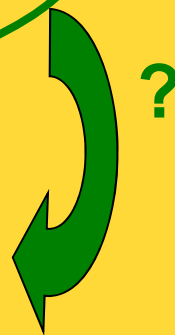
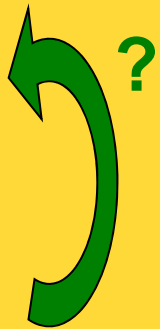


*You do not know what it is like to lose your land. Many of our compatriots finished in a psychiatric hospital!
(family farmer)*

*Sustainability is a more **equitable distribution** of value between operators in the chain to guarantee living conditions for rural populations*

Plurality of « regimes of engagements » (Thévenot, 2006)

Regime of engagement	“Participant figure”	Good engaged	
Justifiable action	Moral subject	Qualification of the common good. “What is sustainability” ?	Desire to talk about justice Pluralism of principles of justice Moral responsibility
Engagement in a plan and Strategy	Stakeholder, highlight his interests	To defend specific interests/strategy Trade-off Action accomplished	Practical and quick action Voluntary liberal capacity Speed time / present time
Familiar Engagement	Attached or affected person	Express personal affects, ease, care	



Capacity of the device to recognize the people affected ?

	Industries & international NGOs	Local communities /smallholders
Forms of knowledges	Experts, global knowledges Agronomy/biology/management Statistics/measurements	Practical and local knowledges– documentation of local cases, monographics
Forms of language	« Liberal civility » => Strategic and technical speech Detachment from affects and personal stories	Genuineness , “Speak from the heart”, Affects, attachments,
Legitimacy of experts or real lives?	Turnover, changing role, personal detachment, mobile, network (managerial figure)	Local attachments, roots, histories of lives. Engagent leur destin quotidien et matériel

Expected in the Roundtable

Disqualified in the Roundtable

Role of local NGOs

Regime of engagement	“Participant figure”	Good engaged	Roles played by the local NGO
Justifiable Action Qualification of the common good.	Moral subject	Desire to talk about justice Pluralism of principles of justice Moral responsibility	Transform the attachments of smallholders/LC in general causes
Engagement in a plan and Strategy	Stakeholder, To defend specific interests/strategy	Practical and quick action Voluntary liberal capacity Speed time / present time	<i>Empowerment</i> of smallholders to become a stakeholder (go to negotiations)
Familiar Engagement	Attached or affected person	Express personal affects	Take care of smallholders in the Roundtables / concern / Ease



MSI:

- While speaking for a large number of voices and are founded on the principle of “inclusion”,
 - They find it difficult to recognise pluralism in defining the “common good”.
 - They also experience difficulties in taking account of personal attachments opening up to people “affected” in their real lives.
- Role of local NGOs in reintroducing care and attachments